

From: Mark Goodale
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/16/01 6:49am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Sirs,

As you have set forth this email address to receive public opinion regarding the settlement with Microsoft, here is my opinion.

I am simply a consumer, with no corporate interests. I'm a full time student, finishing up a major in Religious Studies at Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois. I am also a computer enthusiast.

I believe the current settlement with Microsoft will not effectively redress the problems created by the Windows monopoly.

Microsoft has shown repeatedly that it will exploit any advantage at its disposal to unfairly crush competition, and I think the rather vague terms of this current settlement agreement qualify as such an advantage.

Furthermore, the primary disadvantage to the average computer user is not merely that of limited software choices due to Microsoft's monopoly practice, but ALSO the fact that Microsoft uses it's monopoly position to push inferior products to market while being assured of "instant sales", simply because the product is their "newest release."

Microsoft's monopoly market position has created a specific culture between both the company and the American public. The company has become habitual in its release of buggy and insufficiently beta-tested software, and due to their high-complete domination of the software and OS markets, the American consumer has been forced into an "Always buy the next version of the software" behavior pattern, in hopes that some more of the bugs of previous editions will be addressed. While certainly, nearly EVERY piece of complex software will have some errors in it, in a truly competitive environment companies are somewhat more forced to make sure that more bugs are repaired PRIOR to shipping, as a competitive market will not generally accept an inferior product.

Microsoft has repeatedly thumbed its nose at both you, the US Dept of Justice, and at me, the average American consumer. This settlement is little more than slapping them on the wrist and saying "Go forth and sin no more." To truly make serious inroads against Microsoft's monopoly tendencies and practices, splitting the company in half is the most likely candidate for success. Forcing them to take their operating systems "open source" would do a fair bit towards that as well.

Unfortunately, antitrust efforts against Microsoft will likely avail the American consumer very little until a viable competitor for the Windows OS arises in the market. This becomes unlikely even with splitting the company or opensourcing Windows, simply because Microsoft's monopoly has gone on so LONG that customers are already highly dependant on its proprietary technologies, and will be generally hard to woo away to a new product line. However, I'm confident that with one of the two additional options as well as a tightening of language loopholes in the Settlement agreement, that some innovative company may find a way to do so.

Thanks for your time,
Mark S. Goodale